



European Union
Delegation of the European Commission
to South Africa

EU Perspectives

*Regular publication that seeks to provide information
on EU-related activities of interest to SA readers*



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Headline News

[Summit of the euro area countries: declaration on a concerted European action plan for the financial crisis](#)

"We confirm our commitment to act together in a decisive and comprehensive way in order to restore confidence and proper functioning of the financial system, aiming at restoring appropriate and efficient financing conditions for the economy. In parallel, Member States agree to coordinate measures to address the consequences of the financial crisis on the real economy. In such circumstances, efficient crisis management requires constant and immediate monitoring. We will therefore set up and strengthen procedures allowing the exchange of information between our Governments, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Central Bank and the President of the Eurogroup".

[Poverty Eradication Day: European Commission warns of impact of financial crisis on poor](#)

On International Poverty Eradication Day (17/10), the European Commission warned that the current global financial crisis could seriously undermine the fight against poverty. If the UN Millennium Development Goals are to be met, international donors have to stick to their commitments and increase their development assistance. The warning comes ahead of the UN Conference on Financing Development end of November in Doha/Qatar, where donors will discuss progress made in raising aid levels and new and innovative ways of raising funds for development. European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel said: "The impact of this financial crisis does not stop on Wall Street or Main Street. It is far reaching and, in fact, it's the world's most vulnerable who risk being hurt the most with donor nations shying away from their funding promises because of pressures at home. For developing countries the real crisis is not financial rather it's a crisis of political will to tackle poverty. There may be a global crisis, but let's not be the generation that turns it into a global tragedy."

[EU and the Caribbean seal economic partnership with ground-breaking trade deal](#)

The EU and countries of the Caribbean region signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) which will strengthen ties between the two regions and promote regional integration in the Caribbean. The EPA is the first genuinely comprehensive North-South trade and development agreement in the global economy. It includes a package of measures to stimulate trade, investment and innovation, and to promote sustainable development, build a regional market among Caribbean countries and help eliminate poverty. Speaking at the signing ceremony, European Commission Vice-president Siim Kallas said: "This marks a new era in EU-Caribbean economic relations. The EPA puts the Caribbean firmly on the map for trade and investment. I pay tribute to the Caribbean leaders and negotiators for pursuing their vision of a prosperous future for their region." EU Commissioner for Development Louis Michel, who could not be present at the signing, added: "This is a groundbreaking step forward for regional integration and development for the Caribbean. This deal creates new opportunities for the region in terms of stronger growth and exports, and more jobs".

[EU finance for boosting trade capacity in developing countries reaches almost €1billion in 2005-07](#)

The EU presented to the World Trade Organisation an overview of the 99 trade facilitation projects financed globally by the EU between 2005-2007. The review shows that the EU has spent almost €1bn over this period in funding capacity building, technical assistance and infrastructure projects such as ports and roads in developing countries. These projects are united by the common intention to boost the recipient country's trade infrastructure and ability to benefit from trade and open global markets. The review notes: "Trade Facilitation is vital for developing countries' growth and trade. But many poorer countries need assistance to reform their customs or to improve their transport infrastructure. In providing this assistance we are demonstrating in a very concrete way our commitment to development". Funds have supported projects in Asia (21%), Africa

(31%), Latin America and the Caribbean (15%) and non-EU Europe (including the Balkans and Commonwealth of Independent States: 33%).

Other News

[Commission welcomes the adoption of Erasmus Mundus II by the European Parliament](#)

The European Commission welcomed the vote in the European Parliament in favour of establishing the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus (2009-2013) programme. The EU will thus continue to support joint programmes in Europe with grants to the most highly-talented students and professors from third countries, but will also extend the scope of the programme to the doctoral level. The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel, said: "Erasmus Mundus is a world-class, top-quality programme that promotes academic excellence, intercultural understanding, but also people-to-people contacts. With the significantly increased budget of €950 million we will be able to meet the growing demand for this successful programme". Erasmus Mundus is a European co-operation and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a worldwide centre of excellence in learning.

[European Commission launches "Study in Europe" website to promote European higher education](#)

The European Commission has launched a new web portal called "Study in Europe" which provides clear and up-to-date information about the range of courses on offer in European higher education institutions, admission procedures, costs, scholarships and the higher education environment in Europe. Potential students will find help to decide which country they should go to, which university they should choose, what they may need before they leave home and what will happen when they arrive at their chosen campus. Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said: "European higher education offers outstanding quality, diversity and opportunity. Europe has a world-wide reputation as a centre of excellence in learning, and the "Study in Europe" project will make it easier for potential students around the world to see all that European higher education has to offer."

www.study-in-europe.org

[Doha Development Agenda](#)

Newly appointed EU Trade Commissioner, Catherine Ashton, travelled to Geneva for a meeting with World Trade Organisation Director Pascal Lamy and other key officials in order to discuss the prospects for a successful and balanced conclusion to the ongoing round of trade talks. Commissioner Ashton said: "My meetings in Geneva confirmed to me that Doha is still very much alive. Europe will continue to play a central role in pushing these talks forward. EU member states reiterated to me their commitment to an ambitious and balanced outcome. The current financial crisis requires us to lock in the openness that has generated so much growth and economic prosperity in recent years".

[European Parliament decision on €1 billion food aid for developing countries postponed](#)

Members of the European Parliament's Budgets Committee decided to postpone their vote on the financing of €1bn in food aid for developing countries planned for 2008, a move that would have required an amendment to this year's budget. They instead accepted a proposal by the Council Presidency to "seek an overall solution", not restricted to 2008. This will be the subject of negotiations between the two arms of the budgetary authority in November. Last July the Commission put forward a proposal for extra farm aid to developing countries to help offset the adverse effects of food price rises in these countries.

[Climate change: projections show EU on track to meet Kyoto emission targets](#)

The EU and most Member States are on track to deliver on their Kyoto Protocol commitments for reducing or limiting emissions of greenhouse gases, the Commission's annual progress report on emissions shows. Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: "The latest projections are good news. They show that Europe's co-ordinated action to reach the Kyoto targets is working. But Kyoto is only the first step: now the world needs a new international climate agreement that incorporates the ambitious emissions cuts Europe has set itself for 2020 and beyond. For this reason the additional measures that EU Member States plan need to be implemented, and the Commission's climate change and energy package needs to be approved by the European Parliament and Council, without delay. "

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